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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)  
TO THE SPS COMMITTEE MEETING ON 9-11 NOVEMBER 2022  
FOR THE PERIOD: 1 JUNE – 21 OCTOBER 2022**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE IPPC SECRETARIAT

The following communication, received on 20 October 2022, is being circulated at the request of the International Plant Protection Convention secretariat (IPPC).

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an [intergovernmental treaty](#) signed by 184 countries (as of October 2022), aiming to protecting the world's plant resources from the spread and introduction of pests, and facilitate safe trade. The Convention introduced the development and implementation of [International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures \(ISPMs\)](#) as its main tool to achieve its goals, making it the sole global standard setting organization for plant health.

The IPPC is one of the "Three Sisters" recognized by the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Agreement, along with the Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety standards and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) for animal health standards.

## **1 COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CPM) BUREAU<sup>1</sup>**

1.1. Since June 2022, the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau convened three monthly meetings, two virtual in June and September respectively and one in person in October, slowly coming back to face to face meeting. One in-person Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meeting will be held on 24-26 October 2022. A further six IPPC Global Organizing Committee meetings for the 2022 Regional Workshops were organized and two other meetings for the technical consultation among regional plant protection organizations (TC-RPPOs), two meetings with the African Union Inter-Africa Phytosanitary Council and Economic Community of West African States on a future Africa Phytosanitary Program, over eight CPM Focus Group meetings of the Strategic Framework 2020-2030 Development Agenda Items, Communication, Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues, Food and Other Humanitarian Aid, as well as seven coordination meetings of the International Plant Health Conference (IPHC) organizing committee, all in virtual mode.

1.2. The CPM Bureau, the IPPC secretariat and the IPPC Strategic Planning Group will be celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPPC on the 25 October 2022 at FAO Headquarter.

## **2 IPPC OBSERVATORY<sup>2</sup>**

2.1. The process of transition from the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) to more a sustainable system, called the IPPC Observatory, was completed by the CPM-16 (2022) adoption.<sup>3</sup> The IPPC Observatory adopted by CPM-16 is a system that monitors the implementation of the IPPC,

<sup>1</sup> CPM Bureau: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/governance/bureau/>.

<sup>2</sup> See news item on the IPP: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/cpm-approves-transition-of-implementation-review-and-support-system-to-the-ippc-observatory/>.

<sup>3</sup> CPM-16 report: [https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/07/CPM-16\\_FINAL\\_REPORT-2022-07-20\\_Syh4mHt.pdf](https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/07/CPM-16_FINAL_REPORT-2022-07-20_Syh4mHt.pdf).

ISPMs and CPM Recommendations, identifies challenges and best practices and provides recommendations to the IPPC governing and subsidiary bodies for follow-up actions. This evaluation system gathers the best practices and challenges faced by IPPC contracting parties through surveys and studies and provides an overview at global level on the implementation of the IPPC and the ISPMs.

2.2. To support the promotion on the Observatory, the IPPC Observatory factsheet<sup>4</sup>, the IPPC Observatory video<sup>5</sup> and the visual identity have been released as well as the IPPC Observatory webpage on the IPP has been redesigned. The IPPC Observatory list of topics studies has been converted into a searchable online database available on the IPP.<sup>6</sup>

2.3. In order to improve collaboration and experience sharing, the IPPC secretariat is also fully involved in the work of a working group with CODEX and WOA (World Organization for Animal Health). This working group meets every quarter to discuss the activities of their respective Observatories for monitoring the implementation of standards, share best practices and solutions to improve the efficiency of surveys and the response rate of contracting parties.

2.4. The IRSS triennial report of the European Commission (EC) third cycle project presenting a detailed review of the activities implemented under this project will be posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP).

2.5. The updated 2022 -2024 IPPC Observatory work plan will be presented to the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) in November 2022 for review and approval.

### 3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE<sup>7</sup>

3.1. Since the last update of from the IPPC secretariat to the SPS Committee, the IPPC Standards Committee (SC) met in July 2022 where the focus was to review and discuss the work of the IPPC technical panels. More information at the SC July 2022 meeting report [here](#).

3.2. The next IPPC SC meeting will be from 14 to 18 November 2022 at FAO Headquarter, in Rome, Italy. This will be the first time that IC members will meet in-person since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides the draft Specifications and draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) from consultation period, the SC will also discuss other strategic issues from its work programme. The draft Specifications, that are intended for approval, so then the SC can start the development of the international standards, and the draft ISPMs which will be revised with the intention to be submitted to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) seventeenth session in 2023 for adoption are listed below.

#### Draft specifications:

- Annex International movement of mango (*Mangifera indica*) fruit to ISPM 46 (*Commodity-specific standards for phytosanitary measures*) (2021-011)
- Field inspection (including growing season inspection) (Annex to ISPM 23 (*Guidelines for inspection*)) (2021-018)
- Revision of ISPM 26 (*Establishment of pest free areas for fruit flies* (Tephritidae)) (2021-010)

#### Draft ISPMs:

- Revision of ISPM 4 (*Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas*) (2009-002)
- Use of specific import authorizations (Annex to ISPM 20: *Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*) (2008-006)
- Revision of ISPM 18 (*Guidelines for the use of irradiation as a phytosanitary measure*) (2014-007)
- 2021 Amendments to ISPM 5

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<sup>4</sup> IPPC Observatory factsheet: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc1022en>.

<sup>5</sup> IPPC Observatory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tsuggTpdAQ>.

<sup>6</sup> IPPC Observatory webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ippc-irss/list>.

<sup>7</sup> Standards Committee: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee/>.

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#### 4 IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (IC)<sup>8</sup>

4.1. The activities of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC), which have been conducted virtually since April 2019, are gradually returning to normal. The May 2022 IC meeting was held virtually and the November 2022 IC meeting will be held face-to-face over a period of five days (from 21 to 25 November) in Rome. This will be the first time that IC members will meet in-person since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2. In recent weeks the activities of the IC were mainly focused on reviewing the comments received on the four following draft specifications for guides and training materials after the 2022 consultation:

- Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions, Guide (2018-040)
- National Reporting Obligations (NROs) Guide, revision (2021-026)
- Implementation of risk-based inspection for imported consignments, Guide (2018-022)
- Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) facilitator training materials (2014-008)

4.3. The approval process of these specifications for guide and training materials is still ongoing and will be completed before the IC November meeting.

4.4. According to the Implementation and Capacity Development committee (IC) Terms of reference and rules of procedure (IC TOR and ROP)<sup>9</sup>, the IPPC launched the 2022 Call for IC members. The call was opened on 10 October 2022 to solicit from National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) the nominations for regional representatives and experts to be members (and replacement members) of the IC from May 2023 to May 2026. The deadline to submit nominations to the IPPC secretariat is on 30 November 2022.

#### 5 EPHYTO

5.1. Once again, it is a pleasure to report the continued progress being made with the IPPC ePhyto Solution. The ePhyto Solution continues to provide user countries with the opportunity to exchange digital phytosanitary certificates with any country using the system. As of mid-October 2022, there were 112 countries registered (Mauritius being the latest to register), with 70 countries in full production. In addition, the ePhyto Solution is nearing a total of three million certificates exchanged. Additional features have been added to the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS – the web-based application for countries without their own national systems) including eSignature and a French language version. An Arabic language version of the GeNS (developed with the support of the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation) as well as an ePayment feature are being piloted; and the Arabic version will be live in mid-November.

5.2. With more and more countries coming on board there are always requests to add additional features. As a reminder, when considering these requests, the IPPC secretariat always strives to ensure that any new features added to the system will have applicability across the system for any country wishing to make use of the feature. In an additional development, the FAO Economics section, with funding from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, has been working on a review of available statistics with regard to ePhyto and have discovered that the share of plant exports from ePhyto participants in the global value of exports of plant products has seen an increase of approximately 9 percent points between 2018 and 2021 (from 0.73 percent in 2018 to 9.59 percent in 2021). However, as of the end of 2021, this still only represents 10.6 percent of the value of plant exports requiring phytosanitary certifications was covered by the ePhyto solution (79 billion USD out of 825 billion USD), meaning there is a potential scope for significantly expanding country participation in the use of ePhyto.

5.3. As a reminder for our colleagues the system was built to handle up to one hundred thousand certificates per day, but at present it is averaging about one hundred thousand certificates per month. The IPPC again invites our SPS sisters and any other international organization wishing to

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/>.

<sup>9</sup> [https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/04/IC\\_2022\\_IC\\_ToR\\_and\\_RoP.pdf](https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/04/IC_2022_IC_ToR_and_RoP.pdf).

exchange digital certificates to contact the Secretariat to discuss ways to facilitate those exchanges through the system.

5.4. More information can be found on the [ePhyto webpage](#) on the IPP.<sup>10</sup>

## 6 EPHYTO INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUP

6.1. The ePhyto Industry Advisory Group met on 19 September 2022 in London, UK. It had the participation of 12 participants representing the seed, potato, cotton, grains and fresh fruit and vegetable industries. Ms Shawna Enz-Cross was elected as a new co-chair to replace Ms Alejandra Danielson Castillo.

6.2. Other objectives were to provide updates from the individual industry groups, receive an update on the ePhyto sustainable funding effort and discuss the series of IPPC/IAG workshops held in countries around the world during the past year and to discuss options to change the format and target additional countries and moving forward.

## 7 INTERNATIONAL PLANT HEALTH CONFERENCE (IPHC)

7.1. From 21 to 23 September 2022 in London, UK, the first ever Plant Health Conference convened countries from around the world to discuss global scientific, technical and regulatory issues related to plant health aiming to contribute to a number of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, amongst other objectives. FAO, the [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#) Secretariat and the [Department for Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom](#) have collaborated to gather the world's best plant health experts and advocates to explore more efficient policies.

7.2. More than 500 policymakers, academics and experts from over 74 countries met to address current and future plant health challenges, including the impacts of climate change, food security, environmental protection, facilitating safe trade, and new pest and disease pathways, such as e-commerce. The plenary sessions were webcast and followed by 1,350 viewers. It was an opportunity to share knowledge and discuss global scientific, technical and regulatory issues, alongside actions to tackle these existential threats to our society, economy and environment.

7.3. Collaboration with the SPS Secretariat on the session on "Facilitating Safe Trade and Economic Development", where Mr Rolando Alcalá from the SPS Secretariat, moderated the session was an example of the continued commitment of the IPPC towards facilitating safe trade and protecting the world's plant resources from pests. The Conference also had the participation of the SPS Committee Chairperson Mr Tang-Kai Wang as one of the attendees.

7.4. FAO and the IPPC estimate that every year up to 40 percent of food crops are lost to plant pests and diseases amounting to USD 220 billion in trade loss. This loss leaves millions of people without enough food to eat and severely damages agriculture - the primary source of income for rural poor communities.

7.5. Protecting plant health is critical in achieving the [SDGs](#). Healthy plants contribute to achieving food security for all ([SDG 2](#)) and promote responsible food consumption and production ([SDG 12](#)). Protecting plants helps protect biodiversity and the environment from the impact of plant pests ([SDG 13](#) and [15](#)), and facilitates safe trade, in turn providing decent work and boosting economic growth ([SDG 8](#)).

7.6. More information at: <https://www.agiitoevents.com/event/a6e37cb4-c5a0-4a97-bafe82a7d6ee4bd5/summary>.

## 8 CPM FOCUS GROUP ON SEA CONTAINERS AND INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON REDUCING THE INTRODUCTION OF PESTS THROUGH THE SEA CONTAINER PATHWAY

8.1. At its June 2022 virtual meeting, the CPM Bureau formed the CPM Focus Group (FG) on Sea Containers (FGSC) following the decisions of CPM. The first meeting was held on 25 August 2022 to elect the Chairperson and to identify and prioritize its activities. During the meeting it was agreed

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<sup>10</sup> ePhyto webpage: <https://www.ephytoexchange.org/landing/>.

that members of FGSC will start collecting relevant information to be considered during the revision of CPM Recommendation number 6 on Sea Containers, that it is the IPPC work programme.

8.2. The first workshop related to the work of the newly established focus group on Sea Containers took place on 19-20 September 2022 in London, United Kingdom. Over 130 participants representing NPPOs, RPPOs international organizations and industry stakeholders such as container owners, shipping lines, container manufacturers, freight forwarders, packers, port authorities, marine terminal operators, shippers, importers, exporters attended the workshop.

8.3. Following up from the workshop the second meeting of CPM FG on Sea containers was held on 4-5 October 2022. The FGSC discussed the information exchanged during the workshop presentations and discussions as well as the conclusions of the workshop. The workshop outcomes will help to identify potential regulatory and non-regulatory options necessary for efficient and effective management of the phytosanitary risks associated with the movement of sea containers.

8.4. The focus group will convene again on 27-28 October 2022 in Rome, Italy to revise CPM recommendation number 6 on Sea containers.

8.5. More information at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/sea-containers/>.

## 9 IPPC COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

9.1. The IPPC secretariat continue to produce communication and advocacy materials (IPPC Brochure, released 4 issues of IPPC newsletter, 25 headline news and 32 announcements) in 2022 as well as social media content that reached a wider audience with a steady increase in percentages and double the engagement rate compared to the same period in 2021. Content posted by IPPC on social media was substantially amplified by FAO accounts and other international/ EU institutions (UNDC, EU DG for Environment, UN Biodiversity, etc.) via the Biodiversity Communications Flotilla group on Twitter. It has developed and coordinated the implementation of the 2022 IPPC communications plan that includes the publications plan.

9.2. The IPPC secretariat is supporting development of a new IPPC communication strategy that is under analysis and development by the CPM Focus Group on Communications, which will be presented at the CPM-17 for adoption.

## 10 IPPC CALL FOR EXPERTS AND OTHER MATERIAL

10.1. **Call for experts – To proofread translations of IPPC guides and training materials:** The IPPC secretariat is soliciting nominations for phytosanitary experts to contribute to proofreading translations of IPPC guides and training materials translated to either Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish, on an on-going, ad-hoc basis. <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-experts-to-proofread-translations-of-ippc-guides-and-training-materials/>.

10.2. **Call for Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) members:** The IPPC secretariat is soliciting nominations for regional representatives and experts to be members (and replacement members) of the IC. <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-implementation-and-capacity-development-committee-ic-members-1/>.

10.3. For more information on upcoming calls for various IPPC groups, please check the website: <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/category/deadline/>.

## 11 UPCOMING IPPC EVENTS

11.1. For more information on upcoming meetings, please check the website: <https://www.ippc.int/en/year/calendar/>.

- **24-26 October 2022:** IPPC Strategic Planning Group meeting, FAO HQ. More information [here](#).
- **7-11 November 2022:** Expert working group for the Reorganization of Pest Risk Analysis standards, Milan, Italy. More information [here](#).

- **14-18 November 2022:** IPPC Standards Committee (SC) meeting. More information [here](#).
- **21-25 November 2022:** IPPC Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) November meeting. More information [here](#).

## 12 IPPC VIDEOS AND OTHER TOOLS

12.1. The IPPC secretariat wishes to share with you some tools available.

- Video on the IPPC standard setting procedure: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8zciLFG--8>
- Video on Pest risk analysis: Why we do it and why it is important?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXtQ9zVUqI0&t=212s>
- e-learning course on Surveillance and reporting obligations: <http://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=824>
- e-learning course on Pest Risk Analysis (developed in collaboration with COLEACP): <http://training.coleacp.org/course/index.php?categoryid=208>
- IPPC Observatory Factsheet: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc1022en>
- IPPC Observatory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tsuqqTpdAQ>
- IPPC Observatory webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ippc-irss/list>

12.2. The IPPC secretariat would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere gratitude to the WTO-SPS Secretariat for the strong support and close cooperation.

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